

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 14, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Fire Management Assistance Grants
- EMAC Resources Committed
- Summary of State Resources Committed

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell.

Long Range Predictions

Above normal significant fire potential is forecast for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions should improve during the September through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast calls for above normal temperatures and a slight chance of below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the

Area. Wind events are likely to increase during August as well. Abundant fine fuels are rapidly curing in eastern Montana and will likely increase the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months.



Fire Contracting: Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcq/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

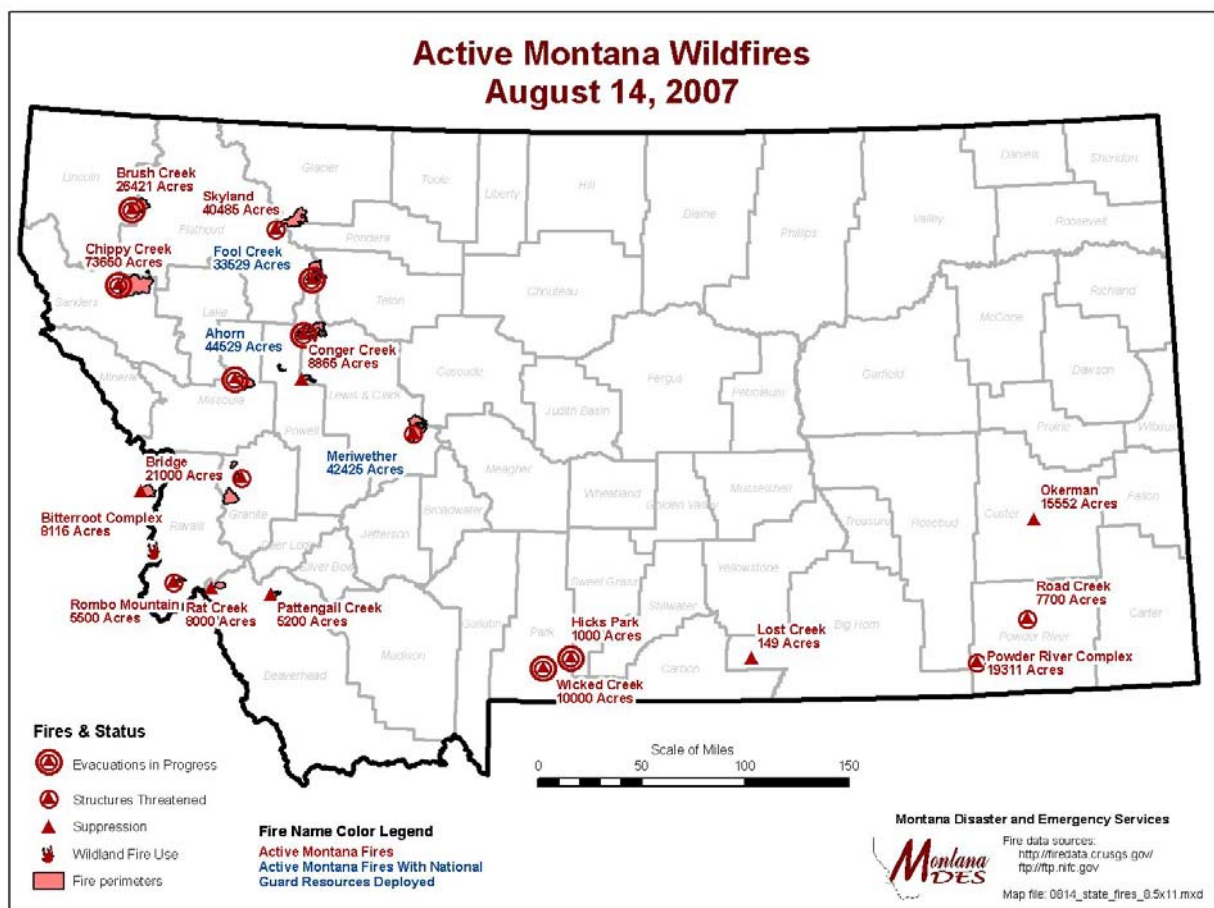
Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority.
(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Area Command Teams	-	1
Type 1 IMT's	-	6
Type 2 IMT's	-	5
Fire Use Management Teams	-	1

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Jocko Lakes started on the CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT is in command of the incident. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 21,270 acres and 9% contained. Personnel assigned: 815. Cause: Lightning. Community of Seeley Lake, surrounding area, Pyramid Lumber Mill and cell tower are threatened. Evacuations of residents and campgrounds remain in effect. Portions of the residents who were allowed to return, we re-evacuated yesterday. Traffic restrictions are in effect for HWY 83 between Clearwater Junction to Summit. Recreational activities on area lakes are restricted. An American Red Cross Shelter is open in Bonner. Structures (8) have been lost.

A **Fire Information Hotline** has been established at the Missoula County Fire Information Call Center from **9:00 am to 9:00 pm** at: **(406)258-3680**. **A 24 hour recorded message can be found at (406) 258-4271.**

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Bennett's Type 1 IMT is in command. Size is 73,650 acres and is 30% contained. Personnel assigned: 566. Cause: Under Investigation. Numerous homes remain threatened. Evacuations remain in effect for Hubbart Reservoir and Niarada. The evacuation for the north portion of Lonepine was lifted last night. Area closures of Mill Creek, Basso, Big Rock, Chippy and Bear Creek drainages remain in effect as well as near by roads.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Pendleton's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Fire is 40,485 acre with 59% containment. Fire has burned about 9,653 acres on the Blackfeet Nation. Personnel assigned: 811. Cause: Lightning. Two structures are confirmed lost. Numerous residences in the Highway 2 Corridor remain threatened. Campgrounds and trail closures remain in effect. Evacuations are in effect for residential area between Two Medicine Creek and Little Badger (Blackfeet Reservation). Evacuation notices have been issued for East Glacier. Temporary restrictions for HWY 2 (speed limit) remain in effect. Continue structure protection. Trail closures in Glacier NP were lifted yesterday.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 29,820 acres with 20% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek, the Wyman #2, and the Fisher Point fires. McNitt's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 559. Cause: Lightning. Numerous residences and other structures remain to be threatened. Restrictions are in effect for hiking, camping and fishing within the closed section of Rock Creek drainage. Road closures for parts of Rock Creek Road are in effect.

Wicked Creek - This fire is located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Size is estimated at 10,000 acres with 0% containment. Stanich's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 28. Cause: Lightning. Evacuations are in place for Mill Creek. Structures are threatened. Mill Creek Road is closed at Snowbank Campground. Forest closures are in effect.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 26,421 acres with 65% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Hill's Type 2 IMT is enroute. Personnel assigned: 546. Cause: Lightning. Residences and outbuildings remain threatened. Good Creek community may be evacuated if the fire continues growing.

***Powder River Complex** (8 fires) is thirty five miles southeast of Ashland. Johnson's Type 2 IMT has been ordered. Personnel assigned: 107. Cause: Lightning. The Powder River Complex is 19,311 acres. Structures are threatened. 2 structures have been burned.

Rombo Mountain is located in the Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. Estimated size is 5,500 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 166. Cause: Lightning. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. Precautionary evacuation notices (stage 1) have been issued. Area closures remain in effect for areas around Rombo Mountain and W of West Fork Road. A public meeting is scheduled for this evening at 1830 hours at the Painted Rocks Boat Ramp.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 33,529 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 140. Cause: Lightning. Larsen's Type 3 Team is assigned. Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten. Evacuations and road closures remain in effect. Structure protection plans are implemented on the structures in Massey Tract, 7 Lazy P Ranch and Teton Pass Ski Area.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Whitney's Type 1 Team. Current size is estimated at 44,529 acres and is 6% contained. Personnel Assigned: 320. Cause: Lightning. Residences and guest ranches remain threatened. Evacuation of the Benchmark area and road closure for Beaver Willow Road remains in effect.

A Joint Fire Information Center has been established for all of the fires in the Bob Marshall Complex. Their phone number is 1-866 831-7450. They are staffed from 0700 – 2100 hours.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's is managing this fire. Current size is estimated at 42,425 acres with 75% containment. Personnel Assigned: 284. Cause: Lightning. Residences, outbuildings and power lines remain threatened.

Lost Creek Fire is located on the Crow Reservation, approximately 6 miles SE of Pryor, MT. The fire is currently 149 acres, with 40% containment. A Type 3 Incident

Management organization is in place. Personnel assigned: 169.

***Road Creek** on Eastern Land Office (DNRC) protection. The Road Creek Fire is 14 miles northwest of Broadus. The County Assist Team (Williams) is in command. The Road Creek Fire is 7,700 acres and is 40% contained. Personnel assigned: 66. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. One structure has been destroyed

Hicks Park Fire along the Boulder River south of Big Timber. The Hicks Park Fire is 1,000 acres and 0% contained. Evacuations are in effect. Structures are threatened.

Rat Creek on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF. Twenty five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Kaage's IMT 2 is in command. The Rat Creek Fire is 8,000 acres and is 0% contained. Personnel assigned: 29. Cause: Lightning. Timber. Sustained crown fire with long-range spotting. Area closure for the Tie Creek and Placer Creek road systems.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 8,865 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. 13 outbuildings are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 7. Cause: Lightning. The Conger Creek Fire is moving south to southeast toward Falls Point Lookout.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 5,200 acres and 20% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 70. Cause: Lightning. No structures threatened.

Maxwell is fifty miles southeast of Miles City, MT. The Maxwell Fire is 1,700 acres and 100% contained. Type 4 IC is assigned. Personnel Assigned: 49. Cause: Lightning.

Moon Creek Settlement is 25 miles southwest of Miles City. Personnel assigned: 64. Cause: Under Investigation. The Moon Creek Settlement Fire is 2,656 acres and is 100% contained.

Wolf Creek is fifty miles southeast of Miles City, MT. The Wolf Creek Fire is 6,713 acres and 100% contained. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. A Type 3 IC is assigned. Personnel assigned: 45. Cause: Lightning. Timber and grass.

Garceau is located on the Flathead Indian Reservation, 11 miles SW of Polson, MT. Morigeau's Type 3 IMT is assigned. The fire is now 3,045 acres and 100% contained. Personnel assigned: 30. Cause: Lightning.

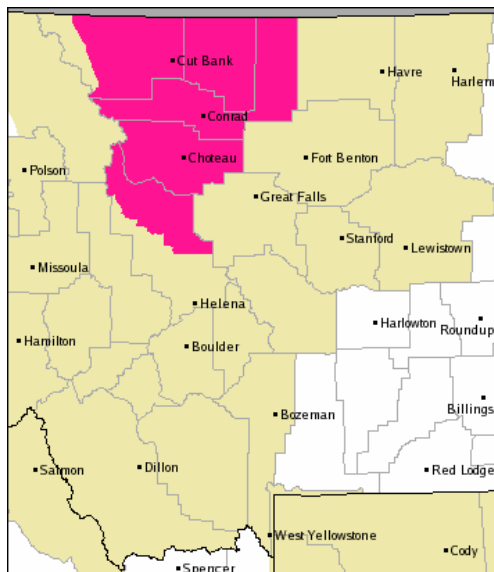
* **NEW FIRES (Emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size)**

III. Weather

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

A Red Flag Warning has been issued by the Great Falls office of the NWS for gusty winds and low humidities along the Rocky Mountain Front.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:



A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:

http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf

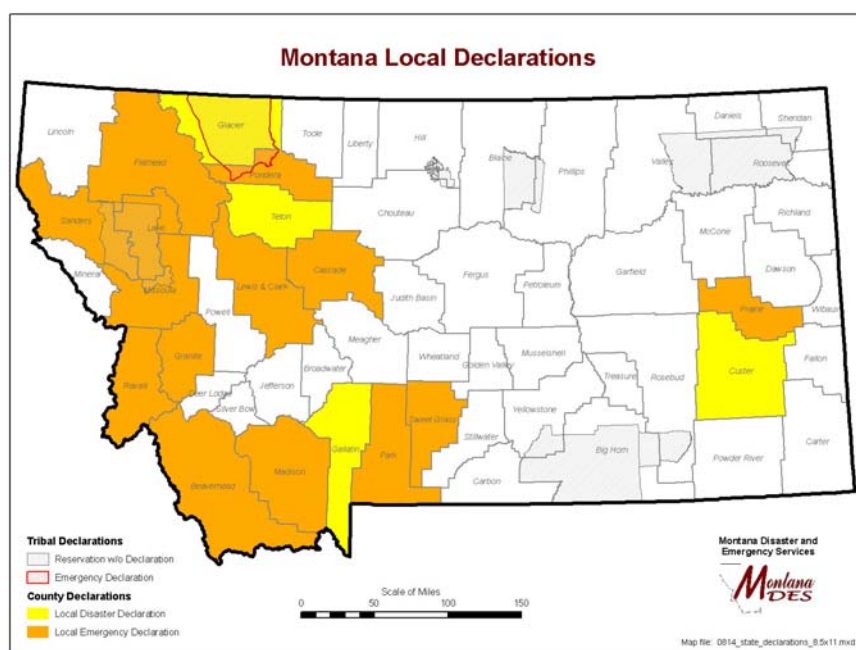
Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:

http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark	Ravalli
Lake	Granite
Cascade	Missoula
Flathead	Sanders
Prairie	Beaverhead
Pondera	Blackfeet Nation
Sweet Grass	Park
Madison	

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton	Gallatin
Glacier	Custer

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007. (Glacier Co. EOC is actually co-located with the Blackfeet Nation's EOC.)
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is activated. Missoula County has put a call center in place for public information. The phone number is 406-258-3680.
- The Ravalli County Emergency Operations Center has been activated as of 8/6/07.
- The Granite County Emergency Operations Center has been activated.
- The Sander County Emergency Operations Center is activated but mobile in the area of the Chippy Creek Fire.
- The Custer County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/12/07.
- The Sweet Grass County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/12/07.
- The Powder River County Emergency Operations Center was activated on 8/14/07.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard to support the Montana Army National Guard have arrived in Helena.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
 - Missoula
 - Helena
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Oltrogge's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana Army National Guard Security Teams (28 personnel each) have been assigned to:
 - Meriwether Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week. The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.